

Compte rendu

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Modern Economic Growth, Rate, Structure and Spread, Simon Kuznets, New Haven and London
Yale University Press, 1966. 529 pages.

par Jean Sexton

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These recommendations received widespread publicity and obscured other features. The report, as a whole, which is a most comprehensive survey of the contemporary economic, business and social structure in the United States.

An important point made is that automation or technological innovation cannot be adjudged the sole culprit in the displacement of labor on the cause of unemployment.

All the other contributing factors are set forth, reinforced by statistical materials and illustrative examples.

The report transcends what is ordinarily conceived of as problems arising out of automation. It really amounts to a blueprint for the minimization or abolition of unemployment.

The book is recommended as perhaps most balanced presentation of the problems present in this technological age and a serious attempt to offer a satisfactory solution.

Whether universal agreement can be accorded its recommendations is to be doubted. Yet one's one differing plan to cope with and offer a solution to the serious problems considered, could be subjected to similar criticism. The issues involved are most assuredly perplexing.

Benjamin S. KIRSH

Automation and Economic Progress, par Howard R. Bowen et Garth L. Mangum, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966, 170 pages.

Automation and Economic Progress est un résumé du rapport de la commission nationale sur la technologie, l'automation et le progrès économique. Les auteurs, tous deux membres de la dite commission, ont choisi judicieusement parmi toutes les études faites pour cette dernière, dix rapports qui leur ont aidé à bâtir ce livre. Nous pouvons diviser cet ouvrage en quatre grandes parties.

Les auteurs débent par des considérations d'ordre général à savoir la vitesse du changement technologique (Chap. 1) et sa corrélation avec le chômage (Chap. 2).

Dans un second temps Bowen et Mangum cherchent une solution pour éviter la résis-

tance au changement. Pour ce faire, ils proposent de créer un climat favorable à l'adaptation au changement technologique par un niveau d'emploi et un revenu suffisant (Chap. 3). Mais il ne suffit pas de créer un climat. Des politiques publiques (Chap. 4) et privées (Chap. 5) adéquates sont indispensables pour faciliter l'adaptation à ce changement technologique.

Dans une troisième partie, les auteurs font quelques considérations générales sur la technologie et les besoins non satisfaits des hommes et de la communauté (Chap. 6). Bowen et Mangum considèrent la technologie par rapport aux besoins de la communauté (Chap. 7) et par rapport au milieu de travail (Chap. 8).

Finalement, les auteurs font un chapitre spécial pour résumer leurs conclusions et leurs recommandations principales. (chap. 10)

Tout le reste du livre est consacré à l'exposé intégral de quatre études supplémentaires qui ont été faites pour la «National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress».

En résumé, disons que l'utilité principale de ce livre est de démystifier le mot «AUTOMATION» et de démontrer qu'on peut s'en servir d'une façon très rationnelle à certaines conditions.

Jean SEXTON

Modern Economic Growth, Rate, Structure and Spread, Simon Kuznets, New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1966, 529 pages.

In a comprehensive analysis of the quantitative characteristics of economic growth, Mr. Kuznets illuminates the basic features of the modern economic epoch. He makes a detailed comparative analysis of industrial structure, income distribution among factors and by size, trends in patterns of product use, and growing international interdependence in the modern period.

The economic world no longer revolves about London and New York. Dozens of new nations are struggling toward economic independence and industrial growth under institutional arrangements quite unlike those of the West. That is why a major portion of the book is devoted to an investigation of international diversity and the underdeveloped countries.

The big problem here is to know whether the economic principles taught in the West are really susceptible of general application or not.

The main task of this monograph is a review of the aggregative (chap. 2), structural (chap. 3-5) and international (chap. 6-9) characteristics of economic growth of nations in modern times.

Before describing the content of each chapter, it is important to remember that this book has two main parts. The first one (chap. 2-6) concentrates on economically developed countries while the second part (chap. 7-9) deals with underdeveloped countries.

The first duty of Mr. Kuznets has been to establish a general framework (chap. 1) including problems of definition and measurement. In chapter 2, the author deals with the aggregative characteristics (modern rates of increase in population, per capita product, etc) and compare them with what little is known of premodern rates.

Chapter 3 deals with trends in industrial structure i.e. the changing proportional contributions of the major sectors. Chapter 4 is devoted to a discussion of the distribution of product and income while the pattern of product use is the topic of chapter 5. So chapter 3-5 the trends in the internal structure of the developed economies in the course of their growth.

Chapter 6 concentrates on trends in international relations while chapter 7 deals with as much of the world as is covered by aggregative and structural data for recent years.

In chapter 8 the author provides a summary of the economic structure of underdeveloped countries in comparison with that of developed countries. Finally, in the last substantive chapter, the author touches the question of the spread of modern economic growth.

This book provides a rethinking of particular branches of economics in the world perspective, combined with a bibliography of available material from many countries. It may help teachers to give their courses a broader and more comparative orientation.

Jean SEXTON

Public Contracts and Private Wages: Experience under the Walsh-Healy Act, Herbert C. Morton, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1965, 132 pages.

...The Federal Government directly and indirectly regulates a wide variety of economic activities. The employer, the worker, the professional man and the consumer are frequently reminded by federal prohibitions, safeguards, incentives, rate-making and so on, of the important role of executive departments and administrative agencies in American life.

Many of these regulatory activities were undertaken during the past thirty years and have been continued routinely without being carefully reviewed to determine whether they achieved then original objectives and whether they are still essential. Because public and congressional attention tends to be focused on a few major issues, there is a growing need for independent evaluations to appraise the objectives and effectiveness of the less conspicuous regulatory activities.

This monograph, dealing with the Walsh-Healy Public Contracts Act, investigates experience under a program launched during the 1930's to combat wage-cutting, child labor, and many other undesirable practices by firms supplying goods under government contracts. It also illustrates the broader need for continuing evaluations of government programs in a rapidly changing social and economic environment.

In short, what has the law accomplished? What is the case for its continuance today? These are the questions that led to the present inquiry into the history of the Act and its recent administration and economic impact.

Part I of the study is an attempt to piece together the story of Walsh-Healy from government records, published and unpublished papers by those who have been involved in law proceedings, and interviews with those now, or previously, involved in administering the Act.

This historical account is more comprehensive than any published, but it is not intended as a detailed chronological record of all Walsh-Healy cases. That would require several volumes. Rather it is intended to show the administrative development of the Act, and more importantly the key issues that have emerged over the years in the effort